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Editorial

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CONTROLS FOR ESPIONAGE

It has been suggested by Sen. J. William Fulbright that a Senate-House committee be set up to ride herd on certain enterprises of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The suggestion of the Arkansas Senator carries with it overtones that do not bode well for future espionage activities of the United States. Ideally, it is well for the elected representatives of the people to constantly supervise the various agencies answerable to the federal government. But would it be wise to permit so many outsiders to learn the inner-most secrets of our country's most secret organization, or to control its timetable?

Congressmen are notoriously poor secret-keepers. Often testimony given in closed sessions of congressional committees eventually is circulated while being described as coming from what may be considered an "unimpeachable source."

Behind Sen. Fulbright's suggestion is his argument that the ill-fated flight of Francis Gary Powers should have never been undertaken at the time of the Paris summit conference. The flight should have been delayed for a more propitious time.

The CIA says, however, the day selected for the flight was determined by the weather, which cleared over Russia and permitted the cameras on the U2 to record the information the CIA was striving to obtain. The CIA was also interested in learning whether Khrushchev was attempting some spectacular space effort just prior to the parley in Paris and from what site an attempt might be launched. Powers' job was to find out — and before the summit meeting.

Concern for peace between the United States and Russia is understandable. But espionage cannot always be delayed to suit the fancy or schedules of diplomats.